

Appl. No. 09/807,968
Amendment dated Jan.28, 2004
Reply to Office Action of Nov.25, 2003

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

The telephone interview with the Examiner on Jan.27, 2004 is much appreciated.

In the replacement sheet of fig.3 submitted on Oct.14, 2003 the approved drawing correction filed Mar.6, 2003 was mistakenly omitted. The enclosed replacement sheet therefore includes the changes to fig.3 of both Oct.14, 2003 (i.e. changing the lowermost numeral 70 to 72) and of Mar.6, 2003.

Regarding paragraphs 4 to 5 of the office action, the phrase at issue, which appears at page 2, lines 4-5 of the application (as filed), has been omitted from the new claims herein.

Regarding paragraph 6 of the office action, new claims 21 to 30 replace claims 14 to 19 (now canceled) and are drafted to overcome the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Regarding paragraphs 7 and 8 of the office action, applicant submits that new independent claim 21, which replaces claim 14 (now canceled), is patentable over the prior art. Claim 21 recites first and second coupling members having flanges with planar inside faces, and a shear bolt having larger diameter shoulders for flush engagement with the planar inside faces. The Brown reference, whether combined with Grauel or any of the other references, is not an obvious combination as it fails to show the structure of claim 21. Applicant's structure is a major improvement over the prior art as it allows the shear bolt to be removed from the coupling members after overload without having to spread the flanges, as would be required in Brown.

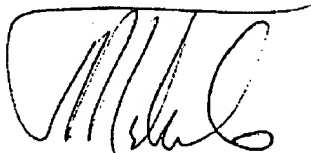
New dependent claims 22 to 30 should be allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued for this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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